

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Thursday, November 4, 2004
Cedar Crest Conference Center
Twin Lakes State Park**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Alan D. Albert, Chair	Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair
David G. Brickley	J. Benjy Burnett
Joy A. Cooley	Linda Crandell
Ted Drake	Richard Formato

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Gerald Connolly	Stephen Murray
Gwen W. Mason	

Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon	Scott Bedwell
Lynn Crump	John R. Davy
David C. Dowling	Joe Elton
Michael R. Fletcher	Tom Smith

Call to Order

Ms. Swinson called the meeting to order.

Mr. Elton gave an overview of Twin Lakes State Park. He reviewed the history of Prince Edward State Park for Negroes and Goodwin State Park. The parks were merged to create Twin Lake State Park.

The buildings are named after African Americans from the area who played a significant role in the park. Both lakes were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. This will become part of the African American Heritage Tour. During WWII German prisoners of war were housed in the CCC camps area.

Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2004

Mr. Albert arrived and declared a quorum present. He called for a motion on the minutes of August 4, 2004.

MOTION: Ms. Crandell moved that the minutes of the August 4, 2004 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Burnett.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report.

He reviewed a number of news articles provided in member packets. Those items included the Wilderness Road Visitor Center Dedication, the High Bridge Rails to Trails effort, state park funding issues and numerous articles on proposed developments at Oconeechee State Park.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Board would be offered the opportunity to tour Oconeechee State Park following the meeting. The actual discussion of the proposed development would take place at the next meeting.

Mr. Maroon noted that Leon App has officially retired after 38 years with the Commonwealth. A luncheon in his honor is planned for November 17th in Richmond.

State Park Project Fund

Mr. Fletcher reviewed the State Park Project Fund balance sheet. He stated that no Board action was needed at this time.

State Park Master Plans

Mr. Davy noted that DCR is mandated to review Master Plans every five years. He noted that at the August 4 meeting the Board was presented seven parks proposed for Master Plan renewal without significant plan revision.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the renewal of the master plans for Pocahontas, Belle Isle, Douthat, First Landing, False Cape, James River State Parks and Caledon Natural Area.

SECOND: Mr. Drake

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Davy noted that since 1998, all but four master plans have been reviewed. He noted that staff would present plans for Twin Lakes and Holliday Lake State Parks. He said there were no controversies associated with the parks.

Ms. Crump presented the Master Plan summary for Twin Lakes State Park. A copy of the Executive Summary is available from DCR.

Twin Lakes State Park is in Prince Edward County. Situated in the Piedmont area of the state, Twin Lakes is within an hour and a half drive of Richmond and Lynchburg. Twin Lakes is within less than an hour drive from seven other state parks.

Twin Lakes had over 125,000 visitors in 2003.

There are two lakes associated with Twin Lakes State Park. Goodwin Lake is used primarily for day use. The area includes a playground and an amphitheater. Prince Edward Lake is used primarily for boating and youth fishing.

The purpose of Twin Lakes State Park is stated as follows:

The purpose of Twin Lakes State Park is to serve as a Gateway to Virginia's Heartland by providing a range of family oriented outdoor recreation and educational experiences, historical connections and conference opportunities enhanced by two lakes nestled in the middle of the Prince Edward-Gallion State Forest and is easily accessible from nearby metropolitan areas.

The following goals were established for Twin Lakes State Park:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the natural, scenic and cultural resources of the park.
- Provide year-round, high quality opportunities for people to enjoy and value the resource.
- Participate in mutually beneficial, regional economic development efforts, which highlight the region's significance within the State.
- Provide for visitor safety and satisfaction.

Ms. Crump reviewed the proposed plans for park facilities.

MOTION: Mr. Burnett moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the approval of the proposed Master Plan for Twin Lakes State Park.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bedwell presented the Master Plan summary for Holliday Lake State Park.

Holliday Lake State Park, located in the heart of Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, was originally Holliday Lake Recreational Area.

The park purpose statement is as follows:

The purpose of Holliday Lake State Park, situated on a 150-acre lake created by the Works Project Administration (WPA) in the 1930s, is to provide opportunities to participate in traditional outdoor recreational activities while appreciating the natural, historical and cultural resources that are available in and around the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest in the heart of Virginia.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the approval of the proposed Master Plan for Holliday Lake State Park.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Recreational Access Roads

Mr. Davy presented the Recreational Access Road proposals.

Mr. Albert noted that while the designation for recreational access roads comes from the Board of Conservation and Recreation, the funding comes through VDOT.

Big Gem Park – Town of Shenandoah

The park is located in Shenandoah County at Old Big Gem Furnace off of Route 340 in the Town of Shenandoah. The proposed road will provide access to the parking area at the park.

Cosner Park – Spotsylvania County

The park is located near the Rappahannock River one-half mile off the Tidewater Trail, near Routes 2 and 17. The proposal is for improvements to HCC Drive to provide improved access to the park.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the proposed access roads for Big Gem Park in Shenandoah County and for Cosner Park in Spotylvania County.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Recreational Trail Grants

Mr. Davy presented two recreational trail grant requests.

Anglers-Cyber Park Connector Trail

This proposal is from the City of Danville to add an additional 1.4 miles of trail to the Dan River Trail in the city. The trail will extend the popular Riverwalk Trail into the state-of-the-art industrial development area called Cyber Park. The trail will run along wooded hillsides and across fields on an old farm from Anglers Park to Stinson Drive. The trail will parallel a portion of the Anglers Ridge Mountain Bike Trail constructed in 2003 by the Southern Virginia Mountain Bike Association.

The new trail will be an 11-12 feet multi use paved trail. Upon completion it will extend Danville's Riverwalk Trail to a total of 6 miles.

The Trails Advisory Committee for FY-2004 trail funds considered this proposal, but it was delayed for future funding in order to allow other trail proposals to receive FY-2004 trail funds. The availability of FY-99 fund in the amount of \$100,000 will now allow this project to be available for grant consideration.

The total cost of the project is \$141,000. The proposed grant amount is \$100,000.

Additional Appropriation for Sugarland Run Trail

In 1997 the Town of Herndon received a \$48,000 grant to develop a connector trail to the W&OD Trail in Northern Virginia. A second grant followed this grant to the Town in the amount of \$50,000 for the Northern Virginia sector of the trail in 1998. Because of several environmental delays, progress has been slow, but both grants are now scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005. It has been determined that in order to complete these grants, DCR will need to supplement the 1998 appropriation by an additional \$27,925. This request is a recommendation to add \$27,925 in FY-2004 unobligated funds to the Herndon project.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the recreational road access requests as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Davy gave an overview of the Rails to Trails Conference to be held the following day. Approximately 150 people are pre-registered. Governor Warner is scheduled to address the luncheon.

Mr. Brickley noted that he participated in the East Coast Greenway project that started in Maine and ended in Key West, Florida. On October 8-11 the ride came through Virginia. He noted that the 10 riders who cycled the entire route were very enthusiastic about their reception in Virginia.

Mr. Albert extended congratulations to Mr. Drake on the election of his wife, Thelma to the United State's Congress.

Virginia State Park Interpretive Themes

Mr. Elton presented an overview of Virginia State Park Interpretive Themes.

He expressed appreciation to the Board for their proactive approach to funding issues. He noted that park managers and staff have noticed and very much appreciate the efforts by the Board.

Mr. Elton noted that in 2005 the park system will tie into the therapeutic, healthful benefits of a park visit. This will probably launch on Memorial Day weekend.

He noted that 2006 is the 70th Anniversary of the Virginia State Park System. There will be a focus on historical and cultural roots. This will include a focus on what the CCC meant to Virginia State parks and to National Parks.

In 2007, Virginia State Parks will be part of the statewide commemoration of the Jamestown Settlement.

State Parks Funding Needs and GOB Update

Mr. Maroon gave a presentation regarding State Parks Funding. He noted that this presentation was presented to the Senate Finance Committee in October.

The presentation summarized the following points:

- Virginia's State Parks are an essential part of the Commonwealth's tourism, outdoor recreation, and conservation efforts. It is a popular system, experiencing tremendous growth, received national recognition, contributes over \$140 million to local and state economies.
- Facing serious and mounting challenges affecting the quality of the parks and facilities (fees among the region's highest over-extended staff, cut backs in programs, high turnover, declining infrastructure, and less law enforcement patrols).
- 1992 to present has been the most dynamic period of growth and expansion in the history of the State Park System. A new round of growth will result from the 2002 GOB.
- Bond projects will help develop numerous parks, provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities statewide, enhance tourism, conserve valuable resources, and contribute to state and local economies.
- Land for potentially 6 new State Parks is being acquired with bond proceeds or by separate legislative actions.
- Operational general fund support has not grown commensurate with the capital improvements and the investment in new parks.
- Virginia ranks last in state funding support for parks.
- The legislative Commission on the Future of Virginia's Environment recommended a major rebenchmarking of the State Park System and recognized the significant operational needs of the System (Senate Document 4, 2002)
- The new facilities and parkland resulting from the 2002 GOB will place additional stress on the State Park system and staff.
- Total additional funds needed are approximately \$13 million per year and \$5 million in one-time funding to make up deficiencies in ongoing operations, program support, vehicles, equipment, maintenance, and repairs and to hire 142 additional FTE.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Department appreciates Board action taken at the August meeting and the subsequent letter with all Board member signatures. He noted that Ms. Swinson took the resolution to her County Board of Supervisors and received their support.

Natural Heritage Funding Needs

Mr. Smith gave a presentation regarding Natural Heritage Funding Needs. A copy of the presentation is available from DCR.

He noted the following facts and figures:

- There are 34 Natural Area Preserves
- 37,922 acres
- 382 miles of boundary lines
- 18 parking lots
- 27 miles of trail
- 421 Rare Plant, Rare Animal and Exemplary Natural Community Occurrences

Recent Actions to Address Operation Shortfalls.

- Closed North Landing River Natural Area Preserve
- Stopped construction of new public access areas
- Reduced staff visits to Natural Area Preserves
- Deferred maintenance, boundary marking, roads, trails, boardwalks, raised nongeneral funds to help cover costs
- Deferred management of invasives and raised nongeneral funds where possible
- Deferred prescribed fire management and raised nongeneral funds where possible
- Increased use of volunteer preserve monitors
- Increased use of volunteers on maintenance projects

Nonpersonnel Operational Needs in addition to existing resources: \$305,000

- Boundaries – currently 43 preserves and 382 miles of boundary which needs maintained on a 5 year cycle.
- Gates – 108 pipe and cable gates which need replaced on a 10 year cycle..
- Roads 76,000 feet gravel road with 5-year maintenance cycle at \$3/foot. .
- Signs – Entrance and interpretative signs on a 5-year cycle. .
- Parking Areas – 18 parking areas, total annual cost of.
- Law Enforcement – for NAPs with public access, hunting or poaching history. Total of.
- Invasive Species – herbicides/sulfacents/dyes, sprayers/cutting tools, contracts. .
- Fire Management – equipment, fuels, training.
- Habitat Restoration – equipment & heavy equipment rental, plant material, supplies.
- Wildlife Management – Deer & Ducks, duck blind materials, kiosk & signage, supplies.

A Few Examples of the Many Unfortunate Events Currently Taking Place

- The Cedars, Lee County Widespread poaching of rock moss – two prosecutions since 2001; due to very limited inspections by DCR staff that do not have the resources to visit the site.

- Red Rock Mountain, Smyth County, purchased in April 2004, visited only once by DCR Natural Area managers insufficient time to mitigate erosion, invasive species damage.
- Big Spring Bog, Grayson County, at current rate of invasion all rare plants will be lost in five years to invasive species.
- Buffalo Mountain, Floyd County, widespread illegal ATV trespass.
- North Landing River, City of Virginia Beach, preserve closed, frequent illegal activity. Phragmites and Japanese stiltgrass abundant and when possible it is treated with the cheapest, least effective herbicides.

Mr. Maroon noted that DCR has significant funding needs associated with every program.

He noted that the state has invested the capital money and that the return on these investments is significant.

He noted that the Governor's budget would be released on December 17.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation will be held on January 6, 2005 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Science Museum of Virginia.

Mr. Maroon noted that this meeting will involve the discussion of the proposed change to the Oconeechee State Park Master Plan.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Statewide Greenways Trail Conference will be held in Richmond on May 1-4. He suggested a meeting in conjunction with that event. Members were asked to tentatively hold May 4, 2005 for a spring meeting date.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan D. Albert
Chairman

Joseph H. Maroon
Recording Secretary